

Att: UPSE Health members in 24/7 operations and facilities:

The following is an update about discussions you may have heard regarding a Memorandum of Agreement for incentives for the summer. PEINU recently announced an MOA which highlighted that IOUE and UPSE were in negotiations. I wanted the opportunity to clarify and provide you information pertaining to this latest development.

First and foremost, UPSE is in favour of incentives and has advocated over the past numerous years for incentives for our members, but unfortunately, Health PEI (the Employer) continues to not consult with the Union and creates incentive programs that are short-sighted. As many of you may recall, UPSE voiced concerns last year about the Employer providing incentives to some of our members and not others. As well, offering incentives to some bargaining units and not others. This practice continues to cause divisiveness amongst our members and our other union partners, and divisiveness amongst our full-time members, and our part-time/casual members as the Employer continues to create and reinforce a part-time/casual workforce with incentives. UPSE wants to see incentive packages that will benefit both our part-time members and our full-time members.

Last year, UPSE was placed in the uncomfortable position of agreeing to the MOA as we wanted to ensure members did not lose out on an opportunity for incentives. Again, we were reluctant to agree as we wanted more inclusiveness and incentives for our full-time members as well, who continue to be overlooked. UPSE signed the MOA last summer for 24/7 operations and this was ongoing until the Employer identified they were discontinuing the incentive program because it was not yielding the results anticipated. This was a direct quote from the Chief Human Resources Officer, Tracy Wolbaum, and was reinforced in an interview by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Corinne Rowswell, with CBC on September 18, 2023. The article stated, there are "No plans to bring back incentives with new collective agreement in place." However, UPSE kindly informed the Employer that the Union did not have a new collective agreement and was still bargaining and requested an extension of the incentives until such time as UPSE signed a new agreement. It was PEINU who signed a new agreement. UPSE made the formal request for an extension in mid to late August and we were informed there was no extension in an all-staff memo emailed to us by the Director of HR on September 7, 2023.

So here we are again, this summer, and again the Employer is seeking to implement a summer incentive program that was sprung on UPSE once again. Not only are they looking at implementing an incentive program for the summer, but implementing almost the identical incentive program that they concluded did not work and "yield the results they were anticipating" last year. The same program that resulted in many workers moving from Full-time to Part-time as confirmed by a senior Health PEI representative last week.

We are currently in discussions with Health PEI on a new MOA and are advocating to expand the program and deviate from the "Box already Built" program that was presented to us. We have not signed a MOA at this time and are in the process of gathering more information to substantiate our position on why the program needs to be expanded for the benefit of our members.

I will keep you informed and updated on this initiative. Thank you for your dedication and hard work in caring for Islanders every day, especially during National Public Service Week.

Karen Jackson, President UPSE

pic: Wayne Thibodeau (CBC) interviewing Karen Jackson today on summer incentives for UPSE members.

